

PYROTA PLAGIATA (HAAG) A VALID MEXICAN SPECIES (COLEOP., MELOIDAE).

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Both Champion and Vaurie have considered certain Mexican specimens of *Pyrota* to be identifiable with *P. postica* LeConte. A re-examination of Mrs. Vaurie's long series from Chihuahua leads me to the conclusion that this series, and Champion's, cannot be included in *postica* but should be referred to *P. plagiata* (Haag).

A series of typical *postica* from Laredo, Texas shows very little variation in color pattern. The black fascia behind the middle of the elytra is subquadrate and never much longer than broad. In no case is it more than 0.35 the length of the elytra. In Mrs. Vaurie's Chihuahua series this fascia is usually elongate-oval, as in Champion's figure, in extreme cases connecting with the humeral spot, as in Lacordaire's figure. It ranges from 0.42 to 0.67 as long as the elytra, the higher figures being subject to error because of the fusing with the humeral spot. The general background color is pale yellow in *postica*, a more orange-yellow on at least the head and pronotum of the Chihuahua series.

Correlated with these differences in color and pattern there are constant differences in the maxillary palpi of the male, as shown in figures 1 to 4. The elytra are also quite different in the two. The Laredo series has the elytra almost smooth, with the costae present but not particularly demarcated. In the Chihuahua series the costae are more evident and bounded by slight depressions, and the intervals between the costae are somewhat swollen.

The selection of the proper name to apply to the Chihuahua series is a difficult task. In am following a decision of the 1948 session of the International Commission at Paris, as outlined on p. 226 of Mayr, Linsley and Usinger, 1953, "Methods and Principles of Systematic Zoology." This decision would call for the rejection of the name *Cantharis maculata* Lacordaire, 1859, on the grounds that it was once a secondary junior homonym of *Lytta maculata* Say, 1823, was detected at the time and replaced with a substitute name, *Cantharis Lacordairei* Berg, 1881. (Both had been listed as *Cantharis maculata* in Gemminger and Harold, *Catalogus Coleopterorum* 7 (1870): 2151.) Following the decision of the Commission as outlined, *maculata* Lacordaire would be replaced permanently by *Lacordairei* Berg, 1881. Since the name *Lytta plagiata* Haag, 1880, has one-year priority over *Lacordairei* Berg, it

is the one that is the first available name. There can be little doubt that Vaurie's series and Champion's specimens from Villa Lerdo can be referred to it.

The basis for the name *Cantharis maculata* Lacordaire, an undoubted *Pyrota*, is rather unsatisfactory. The name dates from a title for a figure, without locality designation or description. Berg first (1881) states that it applies to a distinct Mexican species and that he has examined the type. Later (1883) he synonymizes it under *divirgata* (Vill. y Peñ.). Burmeister (1881) synonymizes it under *vittigera* Blanch. Champion (1892) disagrees with both these synonymies and relegates it to synonymy under *postica* LeConte. I agree with Champion to the extent of withdrawing it and its substitute, plus *plagiata* (Haag), names he considers synonyms of *postica*, and uniting them as possible names for a species he did not recognize. Because of these vagaries it is perhaps fortunate that *maculata* Lacordaire is not available as the name of this species. By a technicality it becomes a junior synonym of *plagiata* (Haag), because it dates from Berg's substitute name. The synonymy now rests as follows:

Pyrota plagiata (Haag)

Cantharis maculata Lacordaire, 1859, Gen. Col. 5, Atlas, pl. 60, fig. 4,4a, 4b; non *Cantharis maculata* (Say), 1823 of Gemminger & Harold, 1870, Catalogus Coleopterorum 7: 2151.

Lytta plagiata Haag, 1880, Berl. Ent. Zeitschr. 1880: 49.

Cantharis vittigera, Burm., 1881, Stett. Ent. Zeit. 42: 22, in part.

Cantharis Lacordairei Berg, 1881, Stett. Ent. Zeit. 42: 303. Substitute name for *maculata* Lacordaire non Say.

Lytta divirgata, Berg, 1883, An. Soc. Cient. Argentina 15: 68, in part.

Pyrota postica, Dugès, 1889, An. Mus. Michoacano 2: 94. Champion, 1892, Biol. Cent.-Am., Coleop. 4 (2): 431, pl. 20, fig. 5, at least in part.

Pyrota divirgata, Denier, 1934, Rev. Soc. Ent. Argentina 6: 60, 64, in part.

Pyrota postica, Vaurie, 1950, American Museum Novitates 1477: 51, in part.

The Monterey, Nuevo Leon and Ahualulco, Jalisco specimens cited from older authors by Champion and Vaurie have not been available for study. I did not see any specimens answering the description of the Ahualulco specimens in the remnants of the Dugès collection in Mexico City. Nor were the specimens cited

by Horn as from Monterey available. Until Horn's specimens are restudied, the identity of the Monterey reference will be in doubt. Except for this one case, I believe that all of the Mexican specimens thus far recorded in the literature as being *postica* should be referred to *plagiata*. I have, however, examined only the series reported on by Mrs. Vaurie. *Postica* will undoubtedly be shown to occur also in Mexico, at least along the borders of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

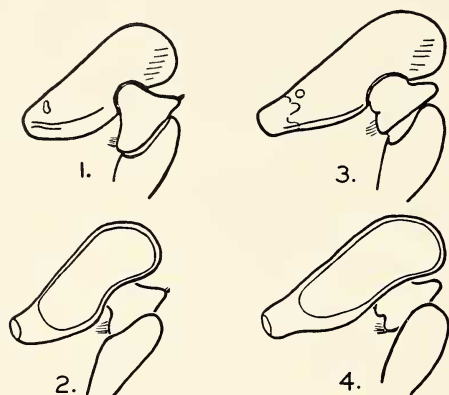


Fig. 1. *Pyrota plagiata* (Haag), dorsal view of right maxillary palpus of male. San Jose Babicora, Chihuahua, Mexico, 7100 ft.; July 5, 1947, D. Rockefeller Exp., M. A. Cazier collector. Fig. 2. Same specimen, ventral view of left maxillary palpus. Fig. 3. *Pyrota postica* LeConte, dorsal view of right maxillary palpus of male. Laredo, Webb Co., Texas; May 20-24, 1948, W. Nutting and F. G. Werner collectors. Fig. 4. Same specimen, ventral view of left maxillary palpus. All figures drawn with the aid of a camera lucida.